

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 SY-05 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 OPR-02 MCT-01 EB-08 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00  
IO-13 OMB-01 /115 W  
-----024170 010613Z /10

R 311620Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8253  
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUS  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY TEGUICIGALPA  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ  
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2716

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT SHUM ES  
SUBJ: EARLY WARNING MESSAGE FROM EL SALVADOR

1. AS THE SECURITY SITUATION GROWS MORE OMINOUS, THE  
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FABRIC OF EL SALVADOR IS THREATENING  
TO UNRAVEL.

2. CONTRIBUTING TO THIS SITUATION, AMONG OTHERS, ARE THE  
FOLLOWING NEGATIVE FACTORS:

A. THE HARSH ECONOMIC REALITIES--WHICH MAY BE  
WORSENING--OF A VERY SMALL AND OVERPOPULATED  
COUNTRY;

B. CHRONICALLY SKEWED PATTERNS OF LANDHOLDING  
AND ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION;  
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C. A HIGH LEVEL OF INTER-PERSONAL VIOLENCE AS  
PART OF THE WAY OF LIFE;

D. A TRADITIONAL SYSTEM OF LAW ENFORCEMENT WHICH  
IS AT VARIANCE WITH TODAY'S PRECEPTS OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS;

E. GROWING UNREST IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND AMONG SOME ELEMENTS OF URBAN LABOR;

F. CONSTANT PRESSURE FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC REFORM AND HUMAN-RIGHTS IMPROVEMENT BY ACTIVIST ELEMENTS OF THE OPPOSITION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH;

G. POLARIZATION OF THE POLITICAL SCENE AND LACK OF DIALOGUE AMONG THE PARTIES;

H. ABSENCE WITHIN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF NORMAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPPOSITION AND DISSENT;

I. DIFFICULTY THROUGHOUT MUCH OF THE GOVERNMENT IN DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN LEGITIMATE DISSENT AND PRESSURE FOR ECONOMIC GAINS ON THE ONE HAND AND SUBVERSION AND "COMMUNISM" ON THE OTHER.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, THE PAST YEAR OR MORE HAS SEEN A MOUNTING LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, PRO-GOES ORDEN AND ANTI-GOES FECCAS AND UTC FIGHT FOR PEASANT LOYALTIES. IN THE URBAN AREAS, THE BLOQUE POPULAR REVOLUNCIONARIO (BPR) AND TERRORIST GROUPS ARE ACTIVE AND ALL SIDES SEEM TO BE ARMING THEMSELVES FOR A

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STRUGGLE WHICH THEY VIEW AS INCREASINGLY INEVITABLE (SAN SALVADOR 2698).

4. THE CURRENT WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS HAS FURTHER UNNERVED THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY OF EL SALVADOR. LACK OF ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS ON THE SOL MEZA AND MENDEZ NOVOA KIDNAPPINGS IS WIDELY INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT THE KIDNAPPERS ARE IN TOUCH WITH THE FAMILIES AND NEGOTIATING FOR SIZEABLE RANSOMS WITH WHICH TO FURTHER SWELL THEIR "WAR CHESTS." THE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED POLITICAL DEMANDS LEVIED IN THE CASE OF JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN FUJIO MATSUMOTO ARE CONSIDERED MORE OMINOUS, QUITE POSSIBLY IMPOSSIBLE OF FULFILLMENT, AND PERHAPS TANTAMOUNT FROM THE OUTSET TO A DEATH SENTENCE. ONE SLIGHTLY MORE OPTIMISTIC VIEW HOLDS THAT THE KIDNAPPING GROUP, FARN, AFTER EXTRACTING ALL POSSIBLE PROPAGANDA VALUE FROM THE POLITICAL DEMANDS MIGHT RPT MIGHT SETTLE FOR A MONETARY RANSOM.

5. THE FACT, HOWEVER, THAT MATSUMOTO REPRESENTS THE FIRST FOREIGN BUSINESSMAN KIDNAPPED HERE, THE FACT THAT HE IS THREATENED WITH IMMINENT "EXECUTION," AND

THE FACT THAT THE FARN SINGLED OUT THE US, GERMAN AND JAPANESE BUSINESS COMMUNITIES FOR PUBLIC CONDEMNATION HAVE HAD A STRIKING IMPACT UPON PSYCHOLOGY OF THOSE LOCAL RESIDENTS AFFECTED (SAN SALVADOR 2645). A GENERAL EXODUS OF FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN COULD EASILY COMMENCE, DEPENDING ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE.

6. WERE SUCH AN EXODUS TO OCCUR, THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS FOR EL SALVADOR ARE VERY SERIOUS. EMPLOYMENT LEVELS WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED, NEW INVESTMENT DISCOURAGED FROM COMING HERE, AND ANY HOPE OF SOLVING THE NATION'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THROUGH LABOR-INTENSIVE INDUSTRIALIZATION WOULD PROBABLY DISAPPEAR UNTIL SOME CONFIDENTIAL

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FUTURE ERA. GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS LEADERS ARE PAINFULLY CONSCIOUS OF THESE RISKS.

7. THE POLITICAL FABRIC OF THE NATION IS ALSO UNDER STRAIN. THE GOVERNMENT IS BEING PRESSED TO DO SOMETHING BUT DOES NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. INADEQUATE INVESTIGATIVE CAPABILITY DENIES IT THE INTELLIGENCE ON THE BASIS OF WHICH TO IDENTIFY AND LOCATE THE TERRORIST GROUPS OPERATING AGAINST IT. PRESIDENT ROMERO IS BEING CRITICIZED AS A "WEAK" PRESIDENT. PROPONENTS OF LAW AND ORDER ARE ONCE AGAIN CRITICIZING UNITED STATES HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY FOR (A) ADDRESSING ITSELF TO FOREIGN SITUATIONS WHICH IT DOES NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND, (B) INHIBITING THE GOVERNMENT FROM DOING WHAT IT SHOULD TO PROTECT SOCIETY, AND (C) STIMULATING AND EMBOLDENING ACTIVIST GROUPS TO CHALLENGE THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES. PRESIDENT ROMERO, FRUSTRATED AND LOSING HIS PATIENCE, MAY SOON BE DRIVEN BY THE DYNAMICS OF THE LOCAL SITUATION TO TAKE SOME ACTION WHICH WILL SEEM RESPONSIVE TO THE THREAT CONFRONTING HIM AND THE GOES. AS OF NOW, THE CHANCES ARE THAT HE WILL YIELD TO THE MOUNTING PRESSURES UPON HIM TO ACT MORE LIKE A "STRONG" PRESIDENT.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL STABILITY, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, POPULAR RESENTMENT  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Expiration:**  
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**TAGS:** PINT, SHUM, PINS, ES  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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